

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 146130  
ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01  
INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-20 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06  
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-07  
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS STATE 146130

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, JA, US

SUBJECT: JAPANESE CAR SALES IN US DROP

REF: (A) STATE 101253; (B) 77 TOKYO A-324; (C) 78 TOKYO  
A-67

### 1. DOMESTIC AUTO SALES UP, IMPORT SALES DOWN

SALES OF US AUTOS JUMPED 11 PERCENT IN MAY (COMPARED WITH  
MAY 1977) TO REACH A NEAR RECORD 962,985 UNITS, WHILE SALES  
OF JAPANESE DROPPED 11 PERCENT. IN APRIL, US AUTOS REGIS-  
TERED A 9 PERCENT CLIMB WHILE IMPORTS WERE DOWN BY 9 PER-  
CENT. THESE TWO MONTHS HAVE REVERSED THE DECEMBER-MARCH  
TREND WHERE US MAKERS' SALES WERE BELOW 1977 LEVELS AND  
JAPANESE AUTO SALES WERE HIGHER. FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY-  
MAY, JAPANESE IMPORTS WERE UP ABOUT 2 PERCENT OVER 1977,  
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PAGE 02 STATE 146130

WHICH WAS A STRONG SALES YEAR.

2. AUTO INDUSTRY ANALYSTS BELIEVE FALL IN IMPORT SALES  
REFLECTS IMPACT OF YEN APPRECIATION -- SINCE LAST FALL  
MOST OF THE JAPANESE FIRMS HAVE RAISED PRICES FOUR TIMES,  
INCLUDING AN APRIL INCREASE THAT AVERAGED \$250 A UNIT.  
RESULT IS THAT IN BOTTOM OF LINE \$3000 RANGE JAPANESE

STICKER PRICES ARE \$300 ABOVE COMPETING US-BUILT MODELS.

3. STATISTICS OF INTEREST FOLLOW: (NOTE THAT PERCENT CHANGE FOR MAY 1978 COMPARED WITH MAY 1977 IS BASED ON DAILY SALES RATE. THERE WERE 26 SELLING DAYS THIS MAY;25 LAST MAY):

#### 4. DOMESTIC SALES

MAY	1978	1977	CHG
GM	547,327	479,949	9.7
FORD	269,382	217,114	19.3
CHRYSLER	127,672	118,475	3.6
AMERICAN	18,604	17,855	-0.2
US FIRMS	962,985	833,393	11.1

#### 5. JAPANESE IMPORT SALES

MAY	1978	1977	CHG
TOYOTA	46,223	55,312	-19.7
DATSUN	35,989	46,633	-25.8
HONDA	26,154	25,097	0.2
SUBARU	8,495	7,096	15.1
MAZDA	6,118	4,761	23.6
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PAGE 03 STATE 146130

J FIRMS	122,979	138,899	-11.5
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6.

JAN-MAY	1978	1977	CHG
TOYOTA	196,532	207,515	-5.3
DATSUN	157,411	167,559	-6.1
HONDA	120,861	105,935	14.1
SUBARU	39,839	29,835	33.5
MAZDA	22,609	16,557	36.55
J FIRMS	537,252	527,401	1.87

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** JAPANESE CAR SALES IN US DROP  
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**Type:** TE  
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